



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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WBIWG Plans Firm Up

By E. Wing Spooner
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The State of Montana's Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) is hosting this year's Western Border Interoperability Working Group (WBIWG) meeting at the Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish, MT on Tuesday, April 21, starting at 8:30 am.

WBIWG meetings offer an opportunity for representatives from Western border states and provinces to interact with each other about radio interoperability issues. This annual get-together provides a platform for federal, state and provincial coordination of public safety communications and technologies with an emphasis on border areas. The group has met annually since 2005.

Make your hotel reservation today!

Call the Grouse Mountain Lodge at:
800-321-8822

Register for the conference!

Please visit: <https://app.mt.gov/cgi-bin/confreg/register/index.cgi>

Note: The editor apologizes ahead of time for the rather cumbersome process associated with this online registration; however, it will provide PSSB with a list of participants and their noontime meal needs. Thanks!

An agenda will be ready for distribution next week, but in the meantime, we have a great selection of speakers, including Chris Lewis, Interoperability Program Manager, who will be giving a briefing on the U.S. Dept. of Interior's ongoing state outreach program along with an overview of U.S. activities.

Hami Ismaili and Jan Samborski with the Canada Border Services Agency Telecommunications' Team will present on their radio status and future plans. Chris Richards, Deputy Chief Patrol Agent, US Customs & Border Protection, will give a presentation on border communications issues, while Kevin Bruski, Interoperability Montana Executive Director and Sheriff Wayne Dusterhoff, Glacier County, will provide an update on the IM Project and communications improvements along the Northern Tier.

In addition, Jackson Hamilton will inform participants about the Alberta Integrated Border Enforcement Team Radio Interoperability Pilot Project. Kenneth King, STARS Emergency Link Centre®, will provide a brief overview on the features of the AW 139 helicopter that is equipped with aero-medical interiors and has night-vision-capable cockpit instruments.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Interoperable Communications Policy Forum

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The National Association of Counties, in collaboration with the National League of Cities, is hosting a two-day Interoperable Communications Policy Forum in Kansas City, Missouri on April 30 and May 1. County and city officials—both in elected and management positions—are invited to attend. The deadline for applications is Friday, March 27.

These Policy Forums help county, city, and municipal officials address challenges to achieving communications interoperability at the local level, as well as answer important questions about interoperability planning. Participants learn how to advocate for and implement actions related to governance, procedures, technology, training & exercises, and usage of voice and data equipment in a seamless manner in real-time.

In the past Montana has sent teams from Butte-Silver Bow, Flathead, Lincoln, Pondera, and Yellowstone. More information is available on NACO's website: http://www.naco.org/Template.cfm?Section=New_Technical_Assistance&Template=/cfiles/ip_forum/ip_intro.cfm.

Eastern Tier Consortium Meeting Held

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

The Eastern Tier Consortia met on Wed., March 25 in Glendive. Denny Palmer, Richland County, chaired the meeting and gave the IMPD report with highlights on the Interoperability Montana (IM) legislative performance audit, the Sustainability Plan process; and Motorola testing along the Northern Tier. He indicated that Brian Sewell is the new IM project manager and that the Montana Highway Patrol has donated a ¾-ton truck to haul the IM snow cat to sites. In addition, Dennis explained that an appropriations request has been submitted through Senator Tester's Office for funding to build out the south eastern loop. Dennis also reported that Mark Adams, Northrop Grumman, is performing a mobile data needs assessment.

Chief Michaels reported on the second Master Controller site. Dawson County is looking at purchasing



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an acre near the old Autovon site. Pricing is needed along with a certificate of survey.

Butch Renders, Richland County, gave the IM Technical Committee (IMTC) report, indicating that the IMTC approved a motion to migrate to the Motorola 7.6 software release. He also explained the slow process involved with having frequencies approved in Flathead County because of the concern over interference with Canadian frequencies. The solution appears to be hiring or retaining a frequency attorney to work with the FCC. Butch also updated the group about the fleet mapping training.

Chuck Lee led a general discussion about Fallon County's concerns regarding the allocation of funds to the IM Project from the Senior Advisory Council. He and John Pisk, Prairie County, explored their county needs as compared to those of the IM Project.

The next meeting was set for Wed., April 29 beginning at 10:00 am at the Community Room of the Dawson County Courthouse, 207 West Bell, in Glendive.

Big Sky 11 Consortium Elects New Project Director

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

The Big Sky 11 Consortium met in Billings on Thurs., March 26 and elected a new project director: Floyd Fisher, Golden Valley Sheriff. Musselshell County Commissioner, Mike Kilby, was elected vice-chair, while Lisa Solf, Petroleum County, remains as secretary. Floyd reported on the last IMPD meeting, noting that the Sustainability Plan is on hold.

A general discussion about site ownership ensued. Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol, noted that it is preferable to own a site rather than to lease or to share it with a private company because of cost and security concerns. The discussion moved on to the City of Billings' need to access the trunking system and factors associated with construction of the new roof of the Yellowstone County Courthouse to accommodate radio antennas. The City of Billings is undergoing a radio needs assessment that should help answer some of these questions. The consortium passed a motion to add the courthouse as a trunked site to the IMTC's five-year build-out plan.

Each county representative gave an update on the status of existing sites and anticipated future needs. Issues were addressed, such as land procurement, repeater needs, location selection, and coverage details. Dale recommended that the counties purchase trunking-enabled consoles and radios rather than trunking-capable because it is more cost effective than upgrading the equipment after a jurisdiction has migrated to the new digital system.

Bruce Brown, FBI, recommended that the IM Project determine how federal agencies will be charged for using the trunked system. He also expressed concerns related to filing NEPAs for last-mile microwave hops in Billings. He indicated that a form is needed so that local jurisdictions can formally assign channels and talk groups on which the FBI can participate and talk, which is a big part of the fleet mapping process.

It was reported that Dept. of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has awarded grants for P-25 base stations for five area hospitals including Crow Agency, Hardin, Lame Deer, Miles City and Red Lodge.

The next Big Sky 11 Consortium meeting will be Thurs., April 30 at the Fire Station, 2300 9th Ave N., in Billings.

Upcoming Meetings

April 2

Mobile Data Consortium
Bozeman • 10:00 am
Best Western City Center Motel, 507 W Main St.

April 2

Northern Tier Consortium (NTIC)
Havre • 9:00 am - noon
Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.

April 8

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)
Great Falls • 10:00 am
Wheat Building • 750 6th Street S.W.

April 15

South Central Montana Consortium (SCMICC)
White Sulphur Springs • 10:00 am
Sheriff's Office Training Center, 123 West Crawford

April 21

Western Border Interoperability Working Group
Whitefish • 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Grouse Mountain Lodge, 2 Fairway Drive